

**Amendments to the Claims:**

*This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:*

Kindly cancel claims 1 - 10 without prejudice, in favor of new claims 11-30.

Claims 1 - 10. (Cancelled)

11. (NEW) A process for adhesively bonding surfaces, comprising applying to at least one surface a molten hot melt adhesive, comprising:

at least one partially saponified vinyl ester homopolymer or copolymer having a molecular weight  $M_w < 70,000$ ; a degree of hydrolysis of 62 to 86 mol%; and a random distribution of vinyl alcohol moieties, wherein the hot-melt adhesive composition is free of mannitol and anionic surfactants; and

contacting said surfaces to be bonded with said molten adhesive therebetween, and allowing said molten adhesive to solidify.

12. (NEW) The process of claim 11, wherein the degree of hydrolysis is 65 to 75 mol%.

13. (NEW) The process of claim 11, wherein the molecular weight  $M_w$  is 5000 to 30,000.

14. (NEW) The process of claim 11, wherein at least one partially saponified vinyl ester homopolymer or copolymer is selected from the group consisting of partially saponified vinyl acetate homopolymers, partially saponified vinyl acetate-vinyl laurate copolymers, and partially saponified vinyl acetate-crotonic acid copolymers.

15. (NEW) The process of claim 11, wherein the hot-melt adhesive composition further comprises sorbitol.

16. (NEW) The process of claim 11, wherein the hot-melt adhesive composition further comprises at least one wax.

17. (NEW) The process of claim 11, wherein the hot-melt adhesive composition further comprises at least one fatty acid ester.

18. (NEW) The process of claim 11, wherein the hot-melt adhesive composition further comprises at least one water-soluble plasticizer.

19. (NEW) The process of claim 11, wherein the hot-melt adhesive composition further comprises at least one antioxidant.

20. (NEW) The process of claim 11, wherein at least one surface is a surface of paper, paperboard, cardboard, wood, or plastic.

21. (NEW) A hot melt adhesive composition suitable for use in the process of claim 11, comprising:

at least one partially saponified vinyl ester homopolymer or copolymer having a molecular weight  $M_w < 70,000$ ; a degree of hydrolysis of 62 to 86 mol%; and a random distribution of vinyl alcohol moieties, wherein the hot-melt adhesive composition is free of mannitol and anionic surfactants.

22. (NEW) The composition of claim 21, wherein the degree of hydrolysis is 65 to 75 mol%.

23. (NEW) The composition of claim 21, wherein the molecular weight  $M_w$  is 5000 to 30,000.

24. (NEW) The composition of claim 21, wherein at least one partially saponified vinyl ester homopolymer or copolymer is selected from the group consisting of

partially saponified vinyl acetate homopolymers, partially saponified vinyl acetate-vinyl laurate copolymers, and partially saponified vinyl acetate-crotonic acid copolymers.

25. (NEW) The composition of claim 21, further comprising sorbitol.
26. (NEW) The composition of claim 21, further comprising at least one wax.
27. (NEW) The composition of claim 21, further comprising at least one fatty acid ester.
28. (NEW) The composition of claim 21, further comprising at least one water-soluble plasticizer.
29. (NEW) The composition of claim 21, further comprising at least one antioxidant.
30. (NEW) The composition of claim 21, wherein the degree of hydrolysis is 65 to 75 mol%; the molecular weight is from 5000 to 30,000; the partially saponified vinyl ester polymer is a vinyl acetate polymer; and further comprising at least two further ingredients selected from the group consisting of sorbitol, wax, fatty acid ester, water soluble plasticizer, and antioxidant.